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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAHORE 000326

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2018

TAGS: PTER PREL PGOV PK IN

SUBJECT: PUNJAB SHUTS DOWN JUD ADMINISTRATION BUT KEEPS SERVICES OPEN

REF: A. LAHORE 323

1B. LAHORE 325

1C. LAHORE 318

CLASSIFIED BY: Bryan Hunt, Principal Officer, Consulate Lahore,  
U.S. Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary: The Punjab provincial government has taken steps to shut down JUD offices and take over the administrative functioning of ten schools and 18 dispensaries while ensuring that people continued to receive necessary services. Provincial authorities related that they could easily handle the management of these JUD facilities. An additional 17 JUD schools may be taken over at a later date by provincial administrators. The Home Secretary also noted that the Chief Minister has garnered wide support from political parties and religious organizations for the JUD shutdown. The provincial government's initial takeover plan encompasses only a fraction of JUD schools in the Punjab. It is unclear if or how the provincial government will address the administration of the remaining JUD schools, which number over 150. End Summary.

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Home Secretary: JUD Shutdown Continues  
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12. (C) Punjab Home Secretary Nadeem Hasan Asif detailed December 18 that the provincial government has taken "administrative control" over ten schools and 19 dispensaries previously run by Jamaatud Dawa (JUD), and closed over 60 JUD offices. The province aimed to "ensure that the common man continues to get facilities while we exert authority to stop extremism," he explained. Regarding the 17 remaining schools registered by JUD that continue to function, he expected that the authorities will continue to monitor those sites and left open the possibility of a future takeover. He added that JUD has shut down one school on its own. Poleconoff inquired about the hospitals that the Health Secretary had learned were registered under a different trust (see para 6). Asif thought that they had been incorporated in the list of dispensaries. Asked about the large JUD office, school and hospital in Muridke, Asif said that he had asked them to "vacate and leave the premises," but he admitted that he was "not sure of the ground position." The Secretary shared that senior JUD leaders (details reported in Ref C) remained under preventive detention but noted that no additional senior leaders had been detained.

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Politicians and Religious Leaders Convinced  
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¶ 13. (C) Asked whether the provincial government has felt political pressure about the JUD crackdown, Asif reported that Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif had recently gathered leaders of various political parties and religious sects, including the Ahl-e-Hadith, Jamiat-e-Ulema and Tehrik-i-Tehsin, to convince them that the shutdown was necessary. Despite the "agitation" in the meeting, Asif described, Shahbaz argued that "national interest and obligations to the international community" compelled him to close JUD. He had also assured the gathering that "nothing illegal will be done," according to Asif.

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Schools Secretary: Punjab Will Take Over Ten Schools  
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¶ 14. (C) Education Secretary (Schools) Nadeem Ashraf told poleconoff December 17 that JUD schools have stayed open during the crackdown on the organization, but attendance has dropped since December 12. He noted that the provincial government felt obligated to keep the schools functioning because the upper class students would soon take exams. He detailed that his department has developed a list of 27 schools in Punjab registered as being administered by JUD out of approximately 45,000 private schools in total. [Note: Ashraf provided a list of 26 schools. End Note.] The JUD schools tended to be in urban areas, he added. Comment: The Education Secretary's numbers of JUD schools operating in the Punjab are widely at variance with the initial number provided by the provincial government in Ref C and reported by the press and in the JUD's own literature. Post believes that the discrepancy is due to the JUD's tendency to register some schools affiliated with the Dawa Network as being run by separate trusts. End Comment

¶ 15. (C) Ashraf did not expect that he would change the administration of all 27 schools at the current time, but rather

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only those singled out by the Home Department for straying from the standard syllabus. While the Special Branch (SP) had provided a list of ten such schools on December 12, he thought that a meeting later December 17 would specify which particular schools the provincial government should manage (see para 2). Most of the JUD schools, he noted, taught the standard curriculum and adequately prepared students for the exams. Moreover, he had heard from parents that the schools had state-of-the-art science and computer labs. He estimated that 7000-8000 students attended these 27 JUD schools. Asked if the provincial government had the resources to take over the JUD schools, he explained that he oversees over 64,000 schools in Punjab, and another 27 would add little extra burden.

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Health Secretary: Punjab To Take Over Dispensaries  
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¶ 16. (S/NF) Health Secretary told poleconoff December 16 that the province has effectively taken over 18 dispensaries previously managed by JUD in ten Punjab districts. He explained that the Chief Minister intends to maintain these "small, basic" facilities, which will employ the same doctors and nurses, but have new locally appointed administrative staff answerable to the provincial government. He expected that local civil society organizations would take over the dispensaries within a few months. He estimated that providing for free medicine and salaries will cost approximately a million rupees (USD 12,500). Asked about the three hospitals allegedly run by JUD (Ref C), he replied that intelligence agents (presumably from the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency) at the meeting he attended had indicated that those hospitals were not registered under JUD but a private trust and therefore could not be taken over.

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Comment: Punjab Scales Back JUD Shutdown  
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¶7. (S/NF) The closure of ten schools and 18 dispensaries pales in comparison to previous estimates (see Ref C), and is likely a result of legal difficulties caused by JUD's foresight in registering large numbers of schools and hospitals affiliated with the organization as private trusts, specifically to evade a crackdown of this sort. Intelligence agencies' apparent involvement in pointing out these problems and pressing the bureaucracy to scale-back its initial takeover plans is distressing. The scaled-back plans will undoubtedly ease the administrative burden on the provincial government, but will allow large parts of the JUD network to continue operations, including recruitment and fundraising directly tied to terrorist activities. Post will press Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif to reevaluate his bureaucracy's plans and to move after all JUD-affiliated assets whether registered under the name of the organization or under the names of private charitable trusts.

End Comment

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